

REMARKS

Claims 1-18 are all the claims pending in the application. Applicants thank the Examiner for allowing claim 7 and for indicating allowable subject matter in claims 5, 15 and 18. Specifically, claims 5, 15 and 18 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

Claims 1-4, 6, 8-14, 16 and 17 presently stand rejected. In particular, claims 1-4, 9-14, 16 and 17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Kawamura et al. (USP 6,452,880); claim 6 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a) as being anticipated by Taniguchi et al. (USP 6,091,698); and claim 8 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Ohyama (USP 6,366,548).

For the reasons set forth below, Applicants respectfully traverses the rejections and request favorable disposition of the application.

Argument

In regard to the rejection of claims 1-5, 9-14, 16 and 17 as being anticipated by Kawamura et al., Applicant is submitting herewith a certified translation of Japanese patent application 2000-14354, the priority document of the present application. Accordingly, based on the priority date of January 24, 2000 and the U.S. filing date of Kawamura et al., November 3, 2000, Applicant has perfected priority and, thus, removed Kawamura et al. as prior art with respect to the present application. Further, Applicant submits that claims 1-5, 9-14, 16 and 17 are patentable over the prior art and the rejection of these claims should be withdrawn.

AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.111
U.S. Appln. No. 09/768,003

In regard to the rejection of claim 6, Applicant has amended the claim which now depends from independent claim 1. Accordingly, claim 6 is allowable for at least the same reason(s) as claim 1.

In regard to the rejection of claim 8, Applicant has amended the claim which now depends from independent claim 7. Accordingly, claim 8 is allowable for at least the same reason(s) as claim 7.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, the application is believed to be in form for immediate allowance with claims 1-18, and such action is hereby solicited. **If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, he is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.**

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



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